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15 December 1961

SUBJECT: The Inspector General's Survey of the Cuban Operation

To comment on the subject report in detail would result in a paper approaching in length, that of the survey itself. Such a commentary would have to deal in depth with the aim of the survey, its scope, and the method used in compiling it. Such a commentary would, at a large number of pages, be required to note inaccuracies, omissions, distortions, unsupported allegations, and many erroneous conclusions.

A detailed inquiry on the Cuban operation on elements other than clandestine tradecraft, has already been completed by the group headed by General Taylor. General Taylor's report was based on testimony by all the principal officers involved in the Cuban operation. The Inspector General's report is not based on complete testimony; some of its conclusions are in conflict with General Taylor's conclusions.

It is not clear what purpose the Inspector General's report is intended to serve. If it is intended primarily as an evaluation of the Agency's role, it is deficient. Neither Mr. Dulles nor I was consulted in the preparation of the Inspector General's report. As a result, there are many unnecessary inaccuracies.

The report tries to do both too much and too little.

On the one hand, it attempts to describe the processes of national security policy-making as though this were a process in logical deduction like working a problem in geometry. According to the Inspector General's account, firm propositions should be laid down in writing and in advance from which correct conclusions as to proper actions must inevitably be drawn. In this respect the report goes far beyond an analysis of the Agency's role, and it is not accurate. It tries to do too much.

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On the other hand, the report treats the preparations for the April landings as if these were the only activities directed against Castro and his influence throughout the hemisphere and the world. It chooses to ignore all other facets of the Agency's intelligence collection and covert actions program which preceded, accompanied, and have followed the landings in April of 1961. Thus, it does too little.

The report misses objectivity by a wide margin. In unfriendly hands, it can become a weapon unjustifiably to attack the entire mission, organization, and functioning of the Agency. It fails to cite the specific achievements of persons associated with the operation and presents a picture of unmitigated and almost willful bumbling and disaster.

In its present form, this is not a useful report for anyone inside or outside the Agency. If complete analysis beyond that already accomplished by General Taylor and his group is still required, then a new kind of report is called for, --a report with clear terms of reference based on complete testimony. Such a report could concentrate on clandestine tradecraft, an asset for which the Agency remains uniquely responsible.

C. P. Cabell

C. P. Cabell
General, USAF
Deputy Director

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1 December 1961

MEMORANDUM FOR: Director of Central Intelligence

SUBJECT : Report on the Cuban Operation

1. In our conversation on Friday morning, the first of December, you mentioned your concern that the Inspector General's Report on the Cuban Operation, taken alone, might give an erroneous impression as to the extent CIA is responsible for the failure of the operation. In my opinion the failure of the operation should be charged in order to the following factors.

a. An over-all lack of recognition on the part of the U. S. Government as to the magnitude of the operation required to overthrow the Fidel Castro regime.

b. The failure on the part of the U. S. Government to plan for all contingencies at the time of the Cuban operation including the necessity for using regular U. S. military forces in the event that the exiled Cubans could not do the job themselves.

c. The failure on the part of the U. S. Government to be willing to commit to the Cuban operation, as planned and executed, those necessary resources required for its success.

Lyman Kirkpatrick

Lyman B. Kirkpatrick
Inspector General

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